

Memorandum

TO: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
CC: Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists, Kris Peterson
FROM: Glenn Morton
DATE: August 23, 2007
SUBJECT: Meeting Announcement & Results of June 1, 2007 Meeting

The next informal meeting between court staff and certified vocational rehabilitation counselors is scheduled for Friday, September 14, 2007, at 2:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the court's administrative offices at 1221 "N" Street, Suite 402, in Lincoln (TierOne Center). Meetings are held on a quarterly basis, with the final meeting for this year scheduled for December 14, 2007. The meeting schedule for 2008 will be discussed at the December 14, 2007 meeting.

The following are the results from the June 1, 2007 meeting. If you have questions or concerns about any of the discussions or decisions at this meeting please notify the court's Vocational Rehabilitation Section prior to the next meeting and they will be considered at that time.

1. New VR Section Fax Number:

It was announced that the court's Vocational Rehabilitation Section now has a new fax number, 402-742-8311, which should be used in faxing documents to the section. This will eliminate routing delays and expedite the processing of these documents.

2. Interim Legislative Study:

It was announced that Legislative Resolution 197 has been introduced by Senator Abbie Cornett, Chair of the Business & Labor Committee, in order to evaluate the vocational rehabilitation program and determine if it is meeting the Legislature's goals. Initial meetings are expected to begin in September, with a hearing to be held before the Business & Labor Committee sometime in October.

3. Changes to Plan Form: Discussions continued on revising the Vocational Rehabilitation Plan form, including a detailed review of the draft document which was circulated with the outcomes memorandum from the March 9, 2007 meeting. A further revised draft is attached to this memorandum, incorporating the additional changes agreed to at the June 1, 2007 meeting as well as other changes identified by the court staff. Please review this latest draft closely as the intention is to complete the discussions at the September 14, 2007 meeting and finalize the new plan form and instruction sheet for adoption. The significant changes agreed to during the June 1, 2007 meeting were:

- In section 7, part F (Tutor Information Fees), add the FEIN along with the Social Security Number;
- In the signature blocks, revise the certifications to more closely reflect the statutory requirements;
- In the Instructions, amend paragraph 4 (Medical Information) to refer to physician “endorsed” information, as well as physician “authored” information, and to strike the word “treating” in recognition that physicians other than treating physicians may endorse FCE results;
- In the Instructions, amend paragraph 9 (Labor Market Information) to reflect previous discussions and decisions regarding requirements for labor market information.

In addition to the above, the employee name and the boxes for “Original” and “Supplement” have been removed from section 7 (Billing Information). This is in recognition that a better method must be developed for requesting, approving, and tracking supplemental billing requests. Editorial/clean-up type changes have also been made throughout the document.

Comments, suggestions, changes, etc., can be submitted to the Vocational Rehabilitation Section prior to the next meeting or can be brought to the meeting for further discussion.

The changes to the plan form also require a review of the policy regarding which proposed changes to a previously approved plan must be forwarded on to the employer/insurer for its agreement after approval by a court specialist. It was decided that with the adoption of the new plan form any changes to the information in part 5 (Type of Plan) and/or part 6 (Training/Vocational Goal) will require submission of a new plan document. The new plan document will then be forwarded on to the employer/insurer for agreement. Changes other than the above will go into effect immediately upon approval by the specialist.

4. Next meeting agenda items. At the next meeting on September 14, 2007 we will address the following as time permits:

- a. TRIO Support Services. Brief discussion of student support services funded under the Higher Education Act of 1965 which may be available to some workers’ compensation clients participating in post secondary training programs.
- b. ESL Vocational Oriented Classes. Brief discussion of a new approach to ESL training which focuses on the language skills important to a particular vocation.
- c. LOE Training & Fact Sheet. It was suggested at the September 22, 2006 Meeting that the court staff and counselors could partner in LOE evaluation training efforts and in the development of a court “fact sheet” on LOE evaluations which could then be reviewed by the judges. How should this be accomplished?
- d. Technology Training. It was suggested at the March 9, 2007 meeting that the plan submission and review process could be greatly improved by training for the counselors

on how best to make use of the technology they have now in interacting electronically with the court. The court's Information Technology staff is open to assisting in this effort, either on an individual or group basis. Would such training be helpful, and if so, how should it be accomplished?

e. Changes to VR Plan Form. Continuing discussions for changes to the plan form and development of the related instruction sheet (see attachment). The intention is to complete the discussions at the September 14, 2007 meeting and finalize the new plan form and instruction sheet for adoption.

5. Future meeting agenda items. The following topics will likely be addressed at future meetings. Any suggestions for additional agenda items are welcome.

a. Job Placement Plans. What is the counselor's role in job placement and what are the counselor's responsibilities while a job placement plan is in effect? Is it appropriate to write a job placement plan in order to rule out job placement as an appropriate priority?

b. Changes to Case Closure Form. The legislature is increasingly requesting information regarding the vocational rehabilitation program and the success of vocational rehabilitation plans. However, existing data is insufficient to allow the court to respond fully to these requests. Could the Case Closure Form be amended to provide the necessary data, and if so, what data should be collected?